COMMON STANDARDS FOR CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

Program assessment should be a continual process within educational institutions. Assessment of individual programs is an integral part of a school district's plan to evaluate the overall effectiveness and/or efficiency of the district's programs and services. The assessment process provides information vital to determining the extent to which the district's goals and objectives are being met.

The program standards in this document correlate to the standards adopted for the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP). This document can be used to help meet the MSIP standard that requires an accountability system to assess student progress and program effectiveness for career education programs. It also contributes to the MSIP standard which requires a written, district wide procedural plan which coordinates the evaluation of the overall effectiveness and/or efficiency of the district's programs and services. The assessment of business programs should be an integral part of the school district's MSIP review and development of the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.

This evaluation document is designed to guide teachers, administrators, program advisory committee members, or other individuals/groups in assessing Business Education programs. Although the objective of any evaluation process is improvement, some specific uses of this program evaluation model could include:

1. An annual program evaluation involving identification of strengths and areas needing improvement, resulting in short- and long-term plans for program improvement.
2. Preparation of an annual report of the program to the Board of Education.
3. A program review in preparation for a Missouri School Improvement Review.
4. Guidance in the development of the program, courses and needed program revisions.
5. Orientation of administrators to the expectations of a quality Business Education program.
6. A guide for teachers new to the program area.
7. Professional development for teachers.

Common Standards
for
Career Education Programs

Division of Career Education
Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Title IX Coordinator, 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-751-4212.

The Division of Career Education has developed the *Common Standards for Career Education Programs.* The six common standards are:

- Program Management and Planning,
- Curriculum,
- Instruction,
- Professional Development,
- Career and Technical Student Organizations, and
- Instructional Facilities and Equipment.

These standards, along with the supporting quality indicators, were designed to provide guidance and direction to local school districts in establishing, maintaining, and evaluating career education programs.

During the development of the Common Standards, input was provided by teachers and administrators. This input was critical to ensure that the Common Standards were reflective of what represents exemplary career education programs across the state.

For more information about the *Common Standards for Career Education Programs,* contact the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Career Education, at (573) 751-3500.

Program Management and Planning

A system of data collection and evaluation provides the information necessary for program development and continuous improvement resulting in high student achievement.

Quality Indicators

- The program has a written statement of educational mission, goals, and objectives which is developed with input from parents, students, administration, community, and business/industry.
- There is a well-defined program plan and outline that reflects the teaching of academic, employability, occupationally-related, and leadership skills.
- There is a written plan to annually evaluate the effectiveness of the program.
- An annual program budget is collaboratively developed by the teacher(s) and administrator(s) to provide adequate funding for professional development, Career and Technical Student Organization activities, equipment, maintenance, supplies, and materials.
- A program advisory committee provides community input and support for the program.
- The teacher promotes the program to the community by providing information about program goals and activities.
- The teacher collaborates with students, parents, administrators, and guidance counselors to assist in making informed career choices that support the student's personal plan of study.

Curriculum

The career education program has a written curriculum for each sequential course with a balance among classroom/laboratory instruction, leadership, and personal development.

Quality Indicators

- The written curriculum guide includes the required components.
- A written grading system/policy for measurement of student achievement is in place.
- The curriculum is reviewed annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes occurring in industry, student needs, and instructional technology.
- Written articulation agreements and dual credit arrangements are developed, implemented, and updated with postsecondary institutions.
- Embedded credit opportunities are available.

- The curriculum reflects a balance of Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) activities and classroom/laboratory instruction to achieve curricular goals.

Instruction

Classroom instruction is congruent with the written curriculum.

<u>**Quality Indicators**</u>

- Daily lesson plans and teaching calendars derived from the curriculum guide are used to direct the instructional process.
- A variety of instructional methods are used to accommodate all learning styles.
- Effective classroom management techniques facilitate instruction.
- Program/course objectives, assessment methods, and performance expectations are shared with students and parents/guardians prior to instruction.
- An instructional management system exists for reporting student progress and classroom mastery of curriculum competencies.
- The teacher utilizes instructional strategies identified in the students' Individual Education Plan to facilitate student achievement.
- School and community resources are used to effectively achieve curricular and program goals.
- Appropriate equipment and instructional materials are utilized to support the curriculum and instructional process.
- Students can acquire industry-recognized credentials, if applicable, that demonstrates skills to meet industry accepted standards.
- The instructor and the guidance staff work cooperatively to provide assistance in the transition to the workplace and/or continued education.
- Work-based learning is integral to the curriculum and program objectives (see addendum for appropriate program requirements).
- Cooperative education is guided by Department policies for credit and supervised employment for approved high school cooperative education programs (Policy Letter #4).

Professional Development

The certificated teacher participates in ongoing, high-quality professional development activities.

Quality Indicators

- The teacher is appropriately certificated.
- The teacher prepares and follows an annual professional development plan that aligns with his/her individual performance-based teacher evaluation.

- The teacher participates in technical and professional activities in the content area and in instructional management.
- The teacher maintains membership, participates, and provides leadership in professional organizations.

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs)

The appropriate CTSO is affiliated with the state and national organization and is an intra-curricular element of the program.

Quality Indicators

- A program of work aligning the CTSO with curriculum goals and objectives is developed annually by students and teachers.
- Curriculum goals and objectives are achieved through the integration of CTSO programs and activities.
- The CTSO program of work includes leadership skills, career competency, community service, and school service.
- All students participate in CTSO activities.
- The local CTSO chapter is recognized for meeting state and/or national organization standards.

Instructional Facilities and Equipment

Facilities and equipment are safe, clean, and appropriate.

Quality Indicators

- Classroom and lab areas meet existing federal, state, and local health and safety codes/standards, including ADA standards.
- Classroom and lab areas are appropriate for the program and conducive to student learning.
- Equipment is in good repair and proper working order.
- Equipment is representative of that used in industry and aligns with the

curriculum.
- An inventory of equipment is on file and updated annually.
- A district plan is in place for equipment replacement and/or immediate repair.

DESE 3120-16 7/06

The Report for Local Program Quality Improvement can be found at: http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/msip.htm. It serves as a tool for school districts to use for program improvement and planning.

LOCAL PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCESS

The process for evaluating the district's business education program follows. *The Report for Local Program Quality Improvement* provides a basis for identifying the strengths and concerns for the various programs and the overall business education curriculum. This then leads to the development of objectives and action plans resulting in program improvement.   While this provides a process for a written evaluation plan, it is not intended to provide information on how to design and conduct program evaluations.

A plan for the evaluation of business education programs should include the following components:

1. The specific goals of the evaluation process.

While program improvement is always the goal of the evaluation process, a more specific goal should be set based on the type of evaluation conducted. The goal of the evaluation could be either (A) a general analysis of the business education program performance measures and standards or (B) a goal with a more specific focus on objectives and action plans previously established through the evaluation process.

A. Conducting a General Analysis

A general analysis of business education programs will provide a baseline of information from which critical issues or areas for improvement can be identified. This general analysis should use *The Report for Local Program Quality Improvement* as a basis for the evaluation process. A general analysis of programs should be conducted at least every five years or when major changes to a program have occurred.

B. Conducting an Evaluation Based on Specific Objectives

A more specific goal for program evaluation would be to determine the achievement of an objective and the effectiveness of action plans developed as a result of a previous program evaluation. This type of goal is appropriate with annual evaluations of program improvement objectives. The basis for this type of evaluation is the business education improvement plan. The measurable objectives and evaluation procedures established for the improvement plan serve as the goals and procedures for the evaluation. This

information can be found on the business education program improvement plan form, a sample of which is included.

2. A description of the evaluation process.

The description will include the procedure for gathering, analyzing and reporting data generated through the evaluation process. Included in this section should be:
- A description of the specific program components, goals, performance measures, or improvement objectives to be evaluated
- Timelines for gathering and reporting data
- Assignment of responsibilities for the evaluation process
- Dissemination plan for the evaluation report

3. A list of data sources which will be used in the evaluation process.

Data sources which address the evaluation goals must be identified as part of the evaluation plan. These data sources could include (among others) :
- Missouri School Improvement Program reports
- Program specific standards and checklists
- The district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan
- The district's public report data
- Performance measures for business education programs
- Follow-up data on students enrolled in career education programs
- Labor market and community needs assessments
- Student interest surveys
- Surveys of employers of graduates of business education programs
- Advisory committee review of programs and recommendations
- Student satisfaction surveys
- Information from administrative/board reviews or evaluation

4. A description of the process for program improvement

This section should include how the information included in the evaluation report will be used in planning for program improvement. Improvement plans must be tied to program standards, business education performance indicators, and/or standards for the Missouri School Improvement Program. Improvement plans should include measurable objectives and action plans which address the program improvement issues. The attached Business Program Improvement Plan form could be used to develop the plans.

Information for this section could include:
- How objectives for improvement will be prioritized and selected
- How the action plans to accomplish the objectives will be determined
- The relationship of the business education program evaluation process to the building or district level Comprehensive School Improvement Plan
- How the implementation of the objectives and action plans will be monitored

BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Objective #

Measurable objective: _____

_____

How objective will be measured: _____

_____

Standard/ Indicator	Action to be taken	Needed Resources	Person Responsible	Start Date	Complete Date

Business Education Evaluation Plan
Mytown High School

Goal: To identify needed improvements to the Business Education program.

Description of evaluation process: The evaluation will be conducted by the business education teacher(s) with help from the program advisory committee. Data will be gathered related to the program standards and performance standards established for business education. Once data have been gathered, a report will be written which describes the program's standing against these standards and performance measures. The report will be shared with advisory committee members, the principal and other administrators, guidance counselors and other teachers. A timeline for conducting the evaluation is included below.

Sample Evaluation Timeline

	Start	Complete
Review previous MSIP report	Oct. 1	Oct. 15
Complete program standards profile checklist	Oct. 15	Oct. 20
Complete MSIP performance standards chart for career education	Oct. 20	Nov. 10
Prepare written report on program and performance standards	Nov.10	Jan. 15
Distribute written report to administrator and advisory committee	Jan. 15	Jan. 20
Prepare advisory committee recommendations	Jan. 20	Jan. 30
Prepare improvement plan based on recommendations	Jan. 30	Feb. 15
Present recommendations and improvement plan to administration/board	Feb. 15	Mar. 1
Implement improvement plan and design evaluation process	Mar. 1	Jun. 30

List of Data Sources:
DESE Report to the District, MSIP 200?
Business Education Program Standards, DESE
Mytown District Annual Performance Report, 200? and 200? (last 2 years)
Program enrollment and placement data from teacher files

Program Improvement Process: The Business Education Advisory Committee will meet to review the evaluation report. The committee will be asked to prioritize the top three areas for program improvement efforts and to make specific recommendations on actions which should be taken to improve those areas. The teacher will prepare an improvement plan based on these recommendations. This improvement plan will contain measurable objectives, action plans, and the relationship of each objective to the Mytown District Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.   This improvement plan will be submitted to the principal for approval and prepared as a written report and presentation for the Board of Education's evaluation of district programs. This improvement plan will be the basis for the program evaluation improvement plan developed the following year.

SAMPLE

ANNUAL EVALUATION PLAN FOR CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS
Mytown Area Career Center

Each career education program area will annually conduct an evaluation to gather performance information and to determine its success in achieving the objectives of the program improvement plan. A written report will be submitted to the Director prior to July 1. This report will include the findings of the evaluation, recommendations for improvement, and a plan to achieve those improvements.

The Director will prepare a summary of the evaluation reports and an overall school improvement plan based on the program area information. This plan will be integrated with the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan when appropriate.

Each career education program area evaluation will use the following data sources:
- enrollment information
- completer and placement data
- home high school graduation data
- appropriate MAP scores
- other data sources specifically related to the annual improvement plan objectives

When possible, advisory committees will be utilized as part of the evaluation and program improvement process.

May 1	Program leaders assemble data, begin report writing
July 1	Program Evaluation Reports to Director
Aug 1	Summary report to Superintendent, Board of Education
Sep 1	Program improvement plans approved by director, shared with CSIP committee.

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING A STUDENT FOLLOW-UP STUDY

The focus on most program improvement efforts should be on the product, or the outcomes of the Business Education program. This emphasis demands that we look at the former students of the program to help us determine its effects. One excellent way of securing information about former students is to conduct a follow-up study.

What is a follow-up Study?

A follow-up study is a procedure for collecting pertinent data from or about individuals after they have had similar or comparable experiences. It is important to remember that "follow-up" implies the collection of data about something which has already taken place. In other words, students are asked to look back and consider how the Business Education program either prepared them or failed to prepare them for their future work or educational endeavors.

It should be noted that follow-up studies do not provide all the answers needed for evaluating programs. They are, however, one important component of a larger design for evaluating the total educational endeavor.

Why Conduct a Follow-up Study?

Generally, a follow-up study is used to obtain information about the extent to which the objectives of the Business Education program are being met. Follow-up studies serve a very useful purpose in eliciting reactions from former students about how well the program prepared them for career-sustaining employment and further education.

Some of the major reasons for conducting follow-up studies are as follows:

- To determine the number and types of employment which former students entered locally and regionally on a part-time or full-time basis.

- To learn the extent to which former students have made use of their career education.

- To discover the extent of the mobility among former students.

- To determine how the Business Education program or teacher could be of further assistance to the former students relative to counseling, placement, and/or education.

- To discover the extent to which to former students are taking advantage of available postsecondary and adult educational opportunities.

It should be remembered that information obtained from follow-up studies has some limitations because the respondents generally have a limited knowledge of alternatives, and each respondent reacts from a different frame of reference. One important factor to keep in mind is that respondents will be reacting to the program as they knew it. If changes have been made since the former students left the program, they may be unaware of them. Hence, the interpretation of data and comments from students must take these changes into account.

Determining the Follow-Up Procedure

The mail questionnaire is the most frequently used approach. The problem of non-respondents, however, is a major shortcoming of this questionnaire procedure. Several research studies have revealed that students in the lower percentile of their class tend to return a lower percentage of questionnaires than students in the top percentile of their class.

If the evaluation effort is to be successful and valid, feedback must be secured from all who participated in the program and not just the successful graduates. Therefore, it is very important that all former students be made to feel that they are valuable members of the group.

One approach to conducting follow-up studies which has proven successful is the interview, conducted either in person or by phone. Personal interviews are probably the most desirable kind of follow-up. They can, however, be expensive and require a great amount of the teacher's time.

The telephone interview can be used effectively. You are more limited in the amount of information which can be obtained, but the telephone interview may be the only workable procedure for some segments of the population. Often, a combination of mail questionnaires and personal interviews with a sample of non-respondents is used.

Determining the Group to Follow-Up

Former students being surveyed should have been out of school a sufficient length of time to be able to reflect on the relevance and helpfulness of their previous educational experience. The student who graduates in the spring of the school year should be surveyed during the early part of the following fall semester. This provides the graduate time to become established in either employment or further education.

It must be remembered, however, that the longer former students have been out of school, the greater problem they will have in separating the value of their formal education experience from the influence of other educational activities. Also, the longer they are away from school, the less valid their judgments about the current Business Education program are likely to be.

Procedures for Conducting the Follow-Up

A technique which is gaining popularity is to send a card or letter to the former student prior to mailing a follow-up questionnaire. The purpose of this card or letter is to alert the former students that they will soon be receiving an important questionnaire which they are urged to complete and return as soon as possible.

The following mailing pattern is suggested at two-week intervals:

- First mailing—"alert" card (see Sample 1)

- Second mailing—follow-up questionnaire, cover letter, and return envelope—stamped and addressed (see Sample 2)

- Third mailing—second request follow-up questionnaire, second cover letter, and return envelope—stamped and addressed (see Sample 3)

The cover letter should be printed on school letterhead and should be signed by the teacher. It is harder to resist a letter that has been personally addressed and signed than it is to resist a greeting from a computer.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope should always accompany the follow-up instrument and cover letter.

Timing is important in conducting a follow-up study. There is a slight preference for the early part of the week; mailings should arrive on Monday or Tuesday. Avoid periods of "stress" such as middle of April, vacation times, holidays, etc.

When using a multiple mailing approach, it makes sense to use a different strategy on the first and second mailings. Some people are early-in-the-week performers, others late-in-the-week performers. If you tried to reach them early in the week on the first mailing, try for an end of the week arrival on the subsequent mailing so the letter arrives on Friday or Saturday. Remind respondents of the date by which the questionnaire should be returned. It is recommended that the respondents be given a two-week period in which to return the follow-up questionnaire.

Cover letters should be printed on letterhead and envelopes should have a return address with which the former students can easily identify. The physical appearance of the materials sent to former students should be of professional quality and should be designed to arouse interest.

Locating Former Students

One of the most difficult problems often faced in conducting a follow-up study is locating the former students. One of the best methods of maximizing returns is the advance orientation of students who will be asked to respond to questionnaires at a later date. Before students leave your program, tell them that they will be receiving a follow-up questionnaire through the mail during the fall of the year. If at all possible, review the questionnaire and its purpose with them so they can raise any questions they may have.

A number of methods can be used to secure the addresses of former students. Some of these methods include—

• Writing "Please Forward" on announcements and questionnaires.
• Sending self-addressed change of address cards to parents of non-respondents so the
   parents can provide the current address.

• Checking the city directory at the public library.

• Checking area telephone directories.

• Asking for help from other students who are still in school.

Sample 1: Alert Letter

(School Letterhead)

Date

Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear _____:

In the near future, you will receive a questionnaire concerning your experiences since leaving our school. I would appreciate your cooperation in completing and returning the questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to aid in improving our Business Education program for the future. Your responses to the questions will be of tremendous aid to us and to the students now enrolled in the program. Your answers will be kept in strictest confidence.

I look forward to getting your response!

Sincerely,

Business Teacher

Sample 2: Cover Letter

(School Letterhead)

Date

Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear _____:

Each year the faculty and administration of _____(High School or
AVTS) asks our graduates to evaluate the Business Education program.

As a graduate of the Business Education program, you are being asked to
participate in a follow-up study. A summary of where our graduates are currently
employed or enrolled in post-secondary education is necessary for continued
funding of our program. We also need your suggestions as to how we can make
the Business Education program better.

You will make a tremendous contribution to the future improvement of the program
by completing and returning the enclosed survey. The information you supply will
be treated in strict confidentiality. Please take a few minutes to complete this form
and return it in the enclosed envelope by _____.

Thank you for your help. If I can be of any assistance to you, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Business Teacher

Enclosures: Follow-Up Survey
                       Mailing Envelope

Sample 3: Second Request Cover Letter

(School Letterhead)

Date

Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear_____:

The response to our request for information from former students of the Business Education program has been most gratifying. The returned questionnaires are being analyzed and I hope to have the report completed in a few weeks.

Perhaps the first questionnaire we sent to you has been misplaced, so I have enclosed another for your convenience. I hope to have all of our former students respond so that the results will be as accurate as possible.

Please use the enclosed envelope to return the completed questionnaire today. Thank you for your cooperation!

Sincerely,

Business Teacher

Enclosures: Follow-Up Survey
                      Mailing Envelope

ANYTOWN HIGH SCHOOL/CAREER CENTER
BUSINESS EDUCATION
FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF CAREER EDUCATION GRADUATES

Name _____
    (Last)   (First)   (Middle)   (Maiden)

Permanent Address (or address at which someone would know how to contact you)

_____
    (Street)   (City)   (State)   (Zip Code)

1. Type of career education instruction you received at your high school,
   career center or community college: (i.e., Business Technology) _____

2. Present employment status (check one):

   _____ a. Employed full-time in field (or related field) of study
   _____ b. Employed part-time in field (or related field) of study
   _____ c. Other unrelated full-time employment
   _____   (1) List field of employment
   _____ d. Unemployed
             _____ (1) Seeking employment   _____ (2) Not Seeking employment
   _____ e. Unavailable
             _____ (1) Attending school   _____ (3) Homemaker
             _____ (2) Military Service   _____ (4) Other _____

3. If you checked 2c (other unrelated employment), which of the following reasons best answers why
   you took a job outside the field of study?

   _____ a. Could not find job in area of study
   _____ b. Location of available job in area of study not convenient
   _____ c. Lacked the skill levels required for available jobs in area of study
   _____ d. Type of work undesirable
   _____ e. Better salary in job outside of field
   _____ f. Other (explain) _____

4. Did you receive job placement assistance from your high school, career center
   or community college? _____

5. Present job title _____

6. How long have you been employed at this job? _____

7. What duties do you find most difficult? _____

   _____

8. What software packages do you use most frequently (i.e., Word, WordPerfect, Excel, etc.)?

   _____

   _____

Follow-Up Survey   2

9. What units of study in your career education study were most helpful?   _____

    _____

10. What units of study in your career education study were least helpful?   _____

    _____

11. Did your career education courses/program prepare you in the following areas to meet your
    employer's requirements?

Place a checkmark (✓) by the correct response:

Y = Yes N = No N/A = Not applicable to job

	YES	NO	N/A		YES	NO	N/A
Cable Wiring/Installing				Keyboarding*			
Calculators				Loading Software			
Chart and Graph Preparation				Machine Transcription*			
Composition (letters, etc..)				Network Management			
Computations/Verifications				Presentational Software			
Computer Programming				Problem-Solving			
Configuration Routers				Processing Mail			
Copy/Fax Machine				Proofreading			
Database Software				Records/Reports Compilation			
Decision-Making				Spreadsheet Software			
Desktop Publishing				Stress Management			
Editing/Revising				Tasks Prioritization			
Electronic File Management				Telephone			
Electronic Forms				Text/Graphics Scanning			
Electronic Mail				Time Management			
Filing (Manual)				Website Development			
Grammar and Punctuation				Word Processing			
Human Relations				Work Habits			
Internet							

*What was employer's requirement?   _____

12. What suggestions or recommendations would you make to improve the effectiveness of career
    education at your local high school, career center, or community college?

    _____

    _____

    _____

Other Comments: